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Publications

There is a lot of discussion these days about our education system.

The well-being of our education system affects us all. Such a far reaching and important subject has provoked many strong, and sometimes conflicting, views about how learning should develop in this province. The issues at stake include our very vision of what good education is, where key problems lie, and what the appropriate role of teachers, students, parents, administrators, staff and politicians should be.

The mandate of the Royal Commission is to listen to your views on how to address and resolve these issues, and to recommend new directions for education that will ensure that Ontario is well-prepared for the challenges of the 21st century.

The following is a review of some of the most talked about issues and problems facing education today. We hope that this will provide some context and help to stimulate productive discussion in the months ahead.

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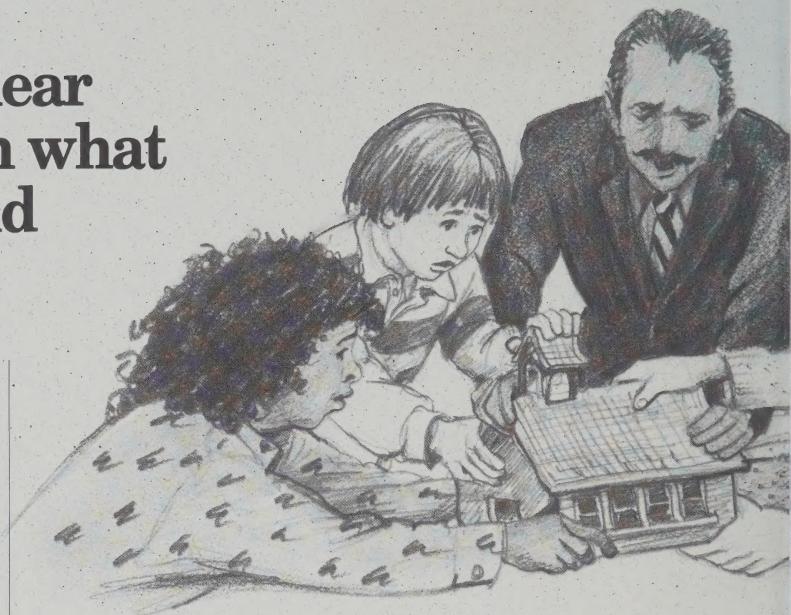


There is no clear agreement on what schools should accomplish.

What do we really expect from Ontario's schools? Do we really know what it is that students need to learn to be prepared for life in the 21st century?

Some people have suggested that in order to be productive members of society, students should be taught certain social and cultural values and skills aside from purely academic subjects. But others insist that this is a role for parents and other institutions, while schools should focus on teaching basics such as the 3R's. But what is a basic education today?

Still others think that what you learn at a particular age or grade level is not nearly as important as learning how to be a life-long learner. They say that today's students need to be prepared to cope with a future in which they will have to train and retrain many times.



In fact, there is disagreement on just about everything in the education system.

Everyone agrees there are problems . . .

The curriculum: what is taught

Many people believe if all students, teachers, parents, and employers knew exactly what was to be taught at each grade level, then it would be easy to solve some of our other problems. It would be easier to set standards and assess them. Teacher training would be more effective.

Parents would be better at helping their children. Employers would know what to expect. Taxpayers would be more enthusiastic about supporting the system.

But such a plan raises many questions. Which subjects should be included and which should be excluded? How much time should be spent on each subject? Should there be specific subjects or should the curriculum be more integrated? Who should decide these issues? How can we ensure that all students



will be able to benefit from this curriculum regardless of their gender, race, or special needs and the wealth, education and cultural background of their parents, or where they live in Ontario?

On the other side of this debate are the people who want more variety. They suggest that students should have more choices so that they can better develop their skills and interests and realize their individual potential. Some argue for a high degree of local development of curriculum, for specialized schools or for individual programs.

Teacher training: how it's taught

Many parents think teachers are doing a good job. Their children enjoy going to school and are excited about what they learn.

People admire the way many teachers care about their students and cope with a wide variety of personalities with different abilities and attitudes toward school.

Others suggest that teachers are not teaching well; that they are not demanding enough of their students. They say that teacher preparation programs should be improved, and perhaps lengthened. Other suggestions for improving the way teachers are taught include implementing a system of temporary teaching certificates, changing the mix of theoretical and practical training, and assigning mentors to new teachers.

Some say new teachers are inadequately trained. Others say new teachers are among the best prepared, and the problem lies with teachers who have taught for many years. Is their training current? Have they been asked to make too many changes in their programs without proper training? How can we best help the teachers already in the system continue to improve their techniques? How can we make sure they do?

Is testing the best solution?

How do we know that schools are doing their job properly? How do we know whether students have learned what they are supposed to learn? Some people feel very strongly that standardized tests given at regular intervals will give us the answer, but there is no agreement on what we should test for.

Others feel equally strongly that tests are not a solution. They say that test results may tell us where some of the problems are, but they will not solve them, since they provide few clues to a student's level of understanding and ability to think. They suggest that the money spent preparing and administering these expensive tests might better be spent.

And what do we do about students who cannot pass the tests in spite of all efforts?

External factors affecting how students learn

It is often said that students are growing up in a very different society from the one that existed twenty-five years ago: a society that is more violent and puts more pressures on even the youngest children. The traditional family has been replaced by many different arrangements, placing additional stress on some students.

We are told that children come to school hungry; they lack parental support and supervision; they watch too much television; they spend too much time on part-time jobs; and too many of them don't have enough language skills in either English or French.

What can the schools do to address these problems? And is it really the responsibility of schools to deal with all these problems? If it isn't, who else should deal with them?

Assigning responsibility

Who should call the shots?

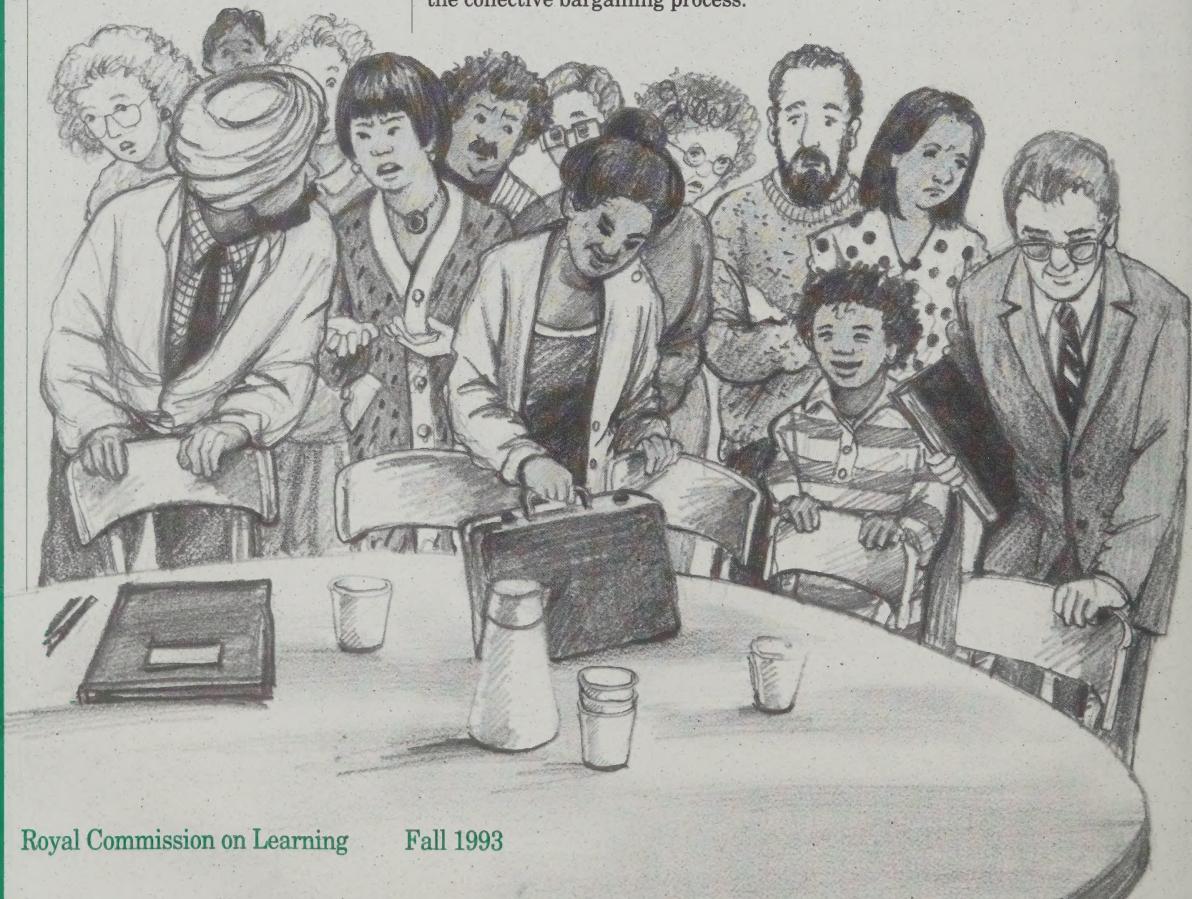
An important part of the debate centres around who should be responsible for what in the education system. In the current difficult economic climate, when tough choices have to be made, it may make a real difference who calls the shots.

How much power should teachers have?

Some say that since the basic activity of teaching and learning takes place in the individual classroom between teachers and students, both of these groups should have more say in what happens. Others feel that teachers already have too much power, both individually in the classroom, and as a group through their unions and the collective bargaining process.

Still others feel that giving more power to teachers would not be a problem if there were better ways of holding them accountable. For example, do teachers really know exactly what is expected of them? Are there ways of measuring whether they meet those expectations? Is there a way of rewarding good teachers, and helping teachers who do not meet expectations to improve their skills?

There is no consensus on what should be done. However, many believe that good teaching is not celebrated and rewarded, and bad teaching is not identified and corrected.

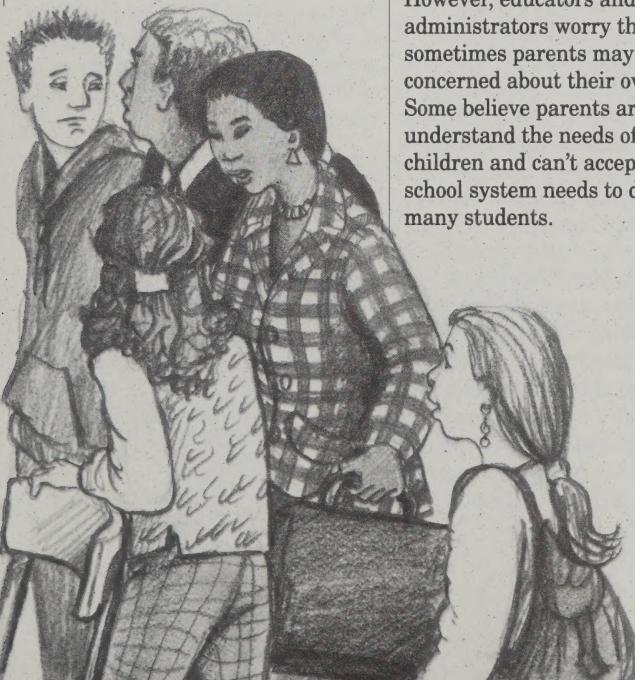


The student voice

Students want to be involved in determining what happens to them in school. They would like a voice at the local school level, at the board level, and at the provincial level. Since they are the direct consumers of education, they feel they should be consulted about changes.

On the other hand, some other groups have suggested that young people do not have the broad overview of what society needs to make a valid contribution. They believe if students are to have any voice at all, it should only address some of the more immediate issues such as discipline policy, or whether students should wear uniforms.

The behaviour of students is under constant scrutiny, particularly with increased media attention to violence in the schools. Is their behaviour affecting their readiness and willingness to learn?



The role of parents

Many people feel that parents must take a stronger interest in their children's education, pay more attention to what their children do, and support the work of teachers more actively. Otherwise, they say, there will be little improvement in student learning no matter what the education system does.

But many parents have complained they feel isolated from the school system. They say that teachers don't keep them up to date about their children's education and how well they're really doing. Some feel a deliberate barrier has been set up between parents and educators and they want it broken down. They want accurate information in plain language, and they want to be listened to when they talk about their children's needs. They want to be involved in making decisions. How should this happen?

However, educators and school administrators worry that sometimes parents may be too concerned about their own children. Some believe parents are unable to understand the needs of other children and can't accept that a school system needs to deal with many students.

Do school systems really need all those senior administrators?

Many people see directors of education, superintendents, consultants and co-ordinators as a whole layer of people the school system could do without. They question the contribution of these educators and think they're an overpaid layer of bureaucrats doing what principals and teachers could do for themselves, perhaps with some assistance from the Ministry of Education and Training.

Others—and there are parents, teachers and principals in this group—see these people as valuable resources. They see consultants and co-ordinators as people who have the time and expert knowledge to deal with the public and help individual principals and teachers with curriculum writing and professional development.

They see superintendents and directors as the people who try to make sure that good things don't just happen in one school, but throughout a system. They believe schools should concentrate on teaching, leaving administrators to take care of such things as purchasing supplies and arranging student transportation, and dealing with trustees, local and provincial governments, interest groups and the public.

Do special educational and community services belong in schools?

Many school systems, especially the larger ones, now have a whole variety of professionals such as psychologists, psychometrists, speech therapists, social workers, and community workers on their central staffs. Taxpayers, especially those with no children, or whose children are not using these services, wonder if school boards should be providing and paying for all of these expensive services.

Many people agree that they are needed, but they feel that like childcare and nutrition programs, these are health and social services that should be provided by other agencies.

On the other side are those who believe that schools should become one-stop centres. They would provide any type of service or support that would help learners of all ages benefit from available educational opportunities. Should the education system have to provide funding to make sure that these services are readily available?

Making school boards cost effective

Lately we've been hearing that there are too many boards and too many trustees. Many people believe they pay themselves too much and don't pay enough attention to the people who elected them.

There are currently almost 2,000 trustees in Ontario, but there used to be even more. In 1969, over 2,000 smaller school boards were consolidated into fewer than 200 larger ones. The consolidation was meant to streamline operations and allow the boards to provide services more economically, but many people feel that this has not happened.

They say that costs have risen dramatically and trustees and central administrators have become far removed from parents and taxpayers. They feel it would be better to turn responsibilities back over to the local school community with some type of school-based management system which would include parental input. Others argue that trustees are performing an important role by reaching out to the grassroots of their communities.

Some people think that there should be even more amalgamation of school boards into larger units, especially in the Metropolitan Toronto and Ottawa-Carleton areas. On the other hand, Tom Wells, who was recently appointed to look into the possible amalgamation of boards in the Windsor-Essex area, recommended against amalgamation. He suggested that it would not be a good way of dealing with the very different

interests of urban and rural students. However, he did suggest that there should be ways of reducing costs by having boards cooperate more in areas such as purchasing, transportation and staff development. He also suggested that there could be fewer trustees on each board.

Perhaps these positions are not necessarily "either-or" situations. Would it be possible to amalgamate some school boards in some parts of the province? Could the number of trustees on each board be reduced, and more cost-sharing measures implemented? Is it possible that more school-based decision making could occur even within a larger school board structure?

The role of the Ministry of Education and Training

Here again there are some strongly opposing viewpoints. Some believe that the Ministry should set some policies and then get out of the way and let schools and school boards do their tasks.



Others feel the Ministry must play a prominent role to maintain high quality education in Ontario. They say the Ministry must take a much stronger lead in setting standards, evaluating them and working with schools in follow-up activities to make sure these standards are met.

Some advocates of school-based management believe the Ministry should provide the expert assistance to schools that is now provided by senior administrative personnel in the larger school boards. This could include a role for the Ministry in collective bargaining with teachers. However, others feel that this can be done just as well or even better by school boards working together.

Before the consolidation of school boards in 1969, the provincial government played a much more direct role in inspecting schools and delivering teacher education programs. After 1969, this role changed to providing expert advice to school boards and teachers. Gradually this role has changed too, as the Ministry has reduced staff and teacher education programs have been handed over to the universities.

Funding effective education

There will always be people who want to increase funding for elementary and secondary education. However, many people feel that our education system cannot be improved by simply throwing more money at it. Ontario already spends more money per pupil on education than most developed countries. There is a growing taxpayer movement that opposes any increases in education spending, and, in fact, strongly recommends cuts.

There seems to be two main issues in funding. The first is how the system is funded. Should education be completely funded by the province, or should it be funded locally, with a share of property taxes? Two recent government initiatives, the Fair Tax Commission and the Education Finance Reform Project, are already working in this area.

The other issue is how funds can be used more effectively. The Royal Commission on Learning will concentrate on this issue as it seeks to define what makes education effective, and how it should happen.

Respecting Rights

It is important to remember that any governance or management structure must respect the constitutional rights of Roman Catholics and Francophones to manage their own education. Ontario cannot make any changes that will take away from those rights.

In addition, while the education of Native people who live on reserve is a federal responsibility, many Natives attend Ontario schools off-reserve. The Native people feel strongly that the organization and content of education in Ontario needs to be more sensitive to their needs and their culture.



Your opinion is important

The Commission is seeking to stimulate discussion on these and other issues which affect our education system. It hopes this will lead to consensus in some areas. Talk to your neighbour, to your colleagues, and to your peers. You can help by reaching out to those with opposing viewpoints, and seeking common ground. Try and understand their position; explain yours.

If you are currently attending school, or have dropped out, if you are a student, parent, teacher, school administrator, trustee, a member of an ethnic or racial community, or if you're simply interested in education, please contact the Commission. The Commission needs to hear from you. We all have a stake in the future of education in Ontario.

Getting Involved

The success of the Commission depends on your involvement. There are several ways to participate.

You can attend the Commission's public hearings, which are being held around the province this fall. If you wish to schedule a presentation, please call the Commission offices. Written submissions are always welcome.

By calling our toll-free number (1-800-565-0861), you can leave a message stating your views on Ontario's education system, or inquire about additional information on the Commission.

Please use the enclosed folder to request more information, or to let us know about an issue which affects you. You can fax or mail it to the Commission.

You can also submit a written or taped brief. People with computers equipped with a modem can tap into TVOnLine, TVO's prototype electronic bulletin board, to join discussions on educational issues in special computer conferences. These Royal Commission on Learning conferences will also be echoed on other networks, including Usenet. Please call for more details.

You can write us at:

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This information is also available on request in large print or braille, on audio cassette or on a computer disk. Please call for additional details.

Schedule of public hearings

Please contact the Commission for exact locations and times.

September

- 27-28 Thunder Bay
- 29 Sioux Lookout
- 30 Kenora

October

- 4-5 Sudbury
- 6-7 Sault Ste. Marie / North Bay*
- 12-13 Toronto
- 18-19 London
- 20 Windsor / Sarnia*
- 21 Windsor / Chatham*

November

- 1-2 Hamilton
- 3 St. Catharines / Guelph*
- 4 Welland / Kitchener*
- 9-10 Scarborough / Oshawa*
- 15-16 Ottawa
- 17 Kingston / Cornwall*
- 18 Peterborough / Hawkesbury*
- 22 Newmarket / Markham*
- 23-24 North York
- 29-30 Toronto

December

- 1 Mississauga
- 6-8 Toronto
- 13-15 Toronto

* simultaneous hearings



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Respecter les droits humains dans l'éducation

Deux grandes questions semblent se poser à propos du financement de l'éducation. La première : comment le système éducatif est-il financé ? La province devrait-elle complètement financer l'éducation ou au niveau local, grâce à une partie des impôts fonciers ? Deux initiatives récentes du gouvernement, la Commission de l'équité fiscale et le projet de réforme du financement de l'éducation, effectuent déjà des travaux dans ce domaine.

La deuxième question : comment améliorer les fonds peuvent-ils être utilisés à meilleur effet ? La Commission royale sur l'éducation se concentrera sur cette question lorsqu'elle cherchera à déterminer sur quoi répose un système d'éducation efficace et la façon dont mettre en place.

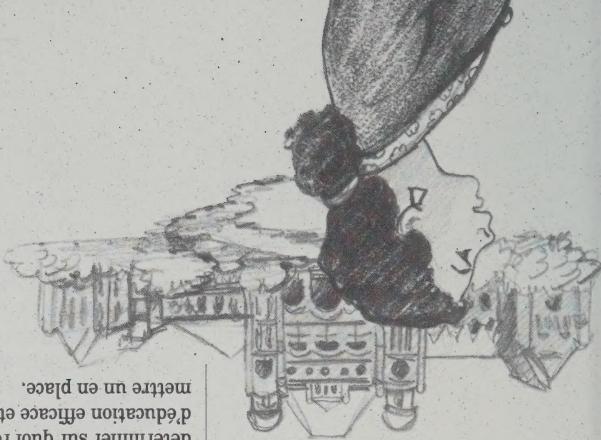
determination lorsqu'elle concerne à déterminer sur quoi répose un système d'éducation efficace et la façon deen

Deux grandes questions semblent se poser à propos du financement de l'éducation. La première : comment le système école-enseignement financerait-il financé ? La province et le ministère des affaires scolaires ont proposé une taxe sur les revenus et un autre sur les propriétaires fonciers. Deux commissions de travail, l'une intitulée « réformes du gouvernement », l'autre « réforme du financement », ont été créées au niveau local, grâce à une charte des impôts fonciers. Deux domaines de compétence sont identifiés : l'éducation et l'administration publique.

Il y aura toujours des gens qui voudront que les subventions octroyées à une entreprise soient augmentées. L'entreprise obtiendra des gains qui voudront que secondaire soit augmentée. Toutefois, basculement estimant qu'il ne suffit pas d'insérer davantage d'argent dans le système d'distribution pour améliorer. L'Ontario dépense déjà plus d'argent par élève que la plupart des provinces industrielles. Il existe un mouvement de contestables en expansion qui s'oppose à toute augmentation des dépenses en matière d'éducation et recommande même l'abandon des coupures.

Certains partisans de la gestion par l'objectif pensent que le ministère devrait offrir aux écoles cette aide spécialisée qui offre à l'heure actuelle dans les grands conseils scolaires le ministère personnel administratif principal. D'autre part, certains partisans de la gestion par l'objectif pensent que le ministère devrait porter à d'autres jouir un rôle dans le cadre de la négociation collective des conventions des enseignants et enseignantes. Cependant, d'autres réunis pourraient tout aussi bien le faire, voire peut-être mieux.

Promouvoir de l'éducation que la qualité de l'éducation en Ontario reste élevée. A leur avis, le ministère devrait davantage prendre les mesures pour établir des normes, avec les évaluations et travailler de concert avec les écoles dans le cadre d'activités de suivi pour s'assurer que ces normes sont respectées.





Le rôle du ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation

Ces opinions ne témoignent peut-être pas nécessairement de situations extrarachées. Si certaines personnes n'ont pas de connaissances scolaires ou quelques régions de la province? Le nombre des conseillers dans les scolaires pourra-t-il être diminué et des mesures de partage des frais mises en œuvre?

des élèves des établissements scolaires de l'enseignement primaire qui détiennent les autorisations d'enseigner dans les établissements scolaires à coûts minimaux auquel il faut ajouter les cotisations scolaires dans les établissements secondaires et les cotisations scolaires dans les établissements privés. Toutefois, il est nécessaire que ces cotisations scolaires soient égales pour tous les élèves des établissements scolaires dans les deux types d'établissements.

Les sortes que les conseils scolaires soient rentables

scolaires. Beaucoup de personnes présentent qu'ils se peinent trop et qu'ils ne présentent pas suffisamment d'attention aux personnes qui les ont éclus.

Dépuis quelque temps on entend dire qu'il y a trop de conseils scolaires et trop de conseillers et conseillères

Lemnadias

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conseils scolaires sont

Le site en sorte que les

Elles stimulent que les cours ont aug-
menté de façon spectaculaire et que les
membres administratifs sont responsables. Elles estiment qu'il vaudrait
beaucoup mieux rendre ses responsabi-
lités à la communauté scolaire locale, et
probablement un quelconque système de ges-
tions dans les écoles, auquel les parents
participeraient. D'autres en revanche
affirment que les conseillers et conseillères
sont échappés à la communauté scolaire et
que leur rôle est de faire face aux
populations de leur communauté.

que l'Etat devient un véritable centre de services. Elles offriront un impôt sur la fortune et une taxe sur les écoles et les universités. Elles permettront d'éviter la crise des centres universitaires. Elles offriront un service ou d'apprentissage à tout étudiant. Elles apprendront à tous les étudiants à faire leur travail. Elles aideront à la formation de toutes les personnes possédant des compétences dans le domaine de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage. Elles aideront à la formation de toutes les personnes possédant des compétences dans le domaine de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage. Elles aideront à la formation de toutes les personnes possédant des compétences dans le domaine de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage.

Les difficultés et les services pour les élèves en communauté scolaire devraient être dispensés dans les écoles?



Qui devrait tenir les réunions ?

D'autres encore estiment que le fait d'octroyer davantage de pouvoir aux enseignants et des gestionnaires ne poserait pas de problème si l'étais-tat de meilleurs moyens de les enseignants des compétences. Mais ce que les enseignants recommandent pour améliorer leurs compétences ?

Une importante partie du débat porte sur la question suivante : Qu'il devrait être responsable de ce qu'est le système d'éducation ? Compte tenu de la situation économique difficile qui existe à l'heure actuelle, on des choses suivantes devraient être faites, ceux et celles qui tiennent les rennes peuvent faire une vraie différence.

Attribuer des responsabilités

Facteurs extrêmes qui exercent une influence sur la lagoin dont les élèves apprennent

D'autres affirmént avec tout autant de conviction que les tests ne représentent pas la solution. Selon elles, les résultats des tests peuvent révéler ou certains problèmes existent, mais ils ne servent pas à résoudre ces derniers, car ils ne donnent qu'une compréhension et l'aptitude à la réflexion des élèves. Toutours selon elles, l'administration dépende à la préparation pourraient être utilisée à meilleure escient. Et que faire à propos des élèves qui ne réussissent pas aux tests en dépit de leurs efforts?

réglilles nous permettraient de trouver
réponses à ces questions, mais elles ne sont
pas d'accord sur ce qu'il faudrait tester.

est-ce la meilleure

des deux méthodes et de leur application dans les deux domaines de l'enseignement et de la recherche. Les deux méthodes sont étudiées dans leur application à l'enseignement des sciences physiques et à la recherche scientifique. Les deux méthodes sont étudiées dans leur application à l'enseignement des sciences physiques et à la recherche scientifique. Les deux méthodes sont étudiées dans leur application à l'enseignement des sciences physiques et à la recherche scientifique. Les deux méthodes sont étudiées dans leur application à l'enseignement des sciences physiques et à la recherche scientifique.

(d) autres designs que les enseignements ne sont pas bons; que certains exigences à l'égard des élèves sont malfaisantes; que les programmes de formation des enseignants devraient être améliorés, pour durer plus longtemps. Parmi les autres suggestions faites pour améliorer la formation des enseignants et des enseignantes citées : mettre en oeuvre un système de certificats d'enseignement temporels, modifier la proportion relative à la formation théorique et pratique de l'assister des mentors aux enseignants et enseignantes de leurs débuts.

occupent des élèves et font face à une
gasté grammme de personnalités ayant
des compétences différentes et une
titude différente à l'égard de l'école.

La formation des enseignants et des enseignantes : la lagune dont elle se fait

ou ils et elles habitent en Ontario? D'autres personnes ont une opinion diamétralement opposée: «les personnes plus grande diversité. Selon elles, les élèves devraient disposer de plus de compétences telles que l'exploration culturelle, de façon à mieux intégrer leurs connaissances dans leur éducation. C'est pourquoi le laboratoire de sciences précoisement que l'université locale et que des programmes d'études se fasse davantage au niveau local et que des écoles spéciales ou des programmes éducatifs soient mis en place.



Presque tous les vollets du système d'éducation font l'objet d'un désaccord.



On n'est pas toujours d'accord sur ce que les écoles devraient accomplir.

Qui attend-on vraiment
des écoles de l'Ontario

Qui attend-on vraiment
des écoles de l'Ontario?
Sait-on vraiment ce que
les élèves doivent
apprendre pour être
prêts à vivre au
21e siècle?

Certaines personnes suggèrent qu'en devrait enseigner aux élèves, hormis des matières purment scolaires, certaines valeurs et compétences sociales et culturelles. D'autres, en revanche, affirment que c'est aux parents et à d'autres établissements de le faire, le rôle des écoles étant de se consacrer à l'enseignement des matières fondamentales, soit la lecture, l'écriture et l'arithmétique. Mais qu'en est-il par éducation de qualité ?

Le programme d'études : Beaucoup de personnes pensent que si tous les élèves, enseignants et encadrants, parents, employeurs et employés y passent une période d'acquisition de connaissances et de compétences dans un cadre simple et décalé, il seraient alors plus facile de résoudre certains autres problèmes. Il existe ainsi plusieurs autres méthodes pour améliorer l'efficacité des enseignements et des formations des salariés.

Notre système d'éducation provoque ces jours-ci de nombreux débats.

L'état de notre système d'éducation nous touche tous et toutes. Ce sujet vaste et important engendre de nombreux commentaires forts, voire quelques conflits, sur l'orientation que devrait prendre l'éducation dans cette province. Les dossier en jeu, qui permettent en question notre propre philosophie de l'éducation, portent sur les thèmes suivants : qu'en est-il des problèmes clés d'éducation, dans quelles secteurs existent-ils des bonnes politiques et politiciens et quelle rôle devraient jouer les enseignants et enseignantes, les élèves, les parents, l'administration, le personnel de soutien, et et quel rôle devraient jouer les enseignants et enseignantes, les élèves, les parents, l'administration, le personnel de soutien, et les politiciens et politiciennes.

Le mandat de la Commission royale sur l'éducation est d'écouter ce que vous aviez à dire sur la façon de traiter et de résoudre ces questions et de recommander de nouvelles orientations en matière d'éducation pour que l'Ontario soit prêt à relever les défis du 21^e siècle.

Ce qui suit est un condensé des questions et des problèmes que soulève le plus souvent le monde de l'éducation d'aujourd'hui. Nous espérons que ce document placera quelques peu les choses en perspective et servira à déclencher des discussions constructives dans les mois à venir.

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